

That is twice the national average. We have 210,000 people in our school district. These students are being educated in trailers, they are being educated in portables.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that this is not an appropriate place for our students in America to be educated. They are crying out for better educational opportunities.

I believe education is a nonpartisan issue and should be approached in that manner. Our goal should be to prepare our students for the next millennium, for the great challenges that lie ahead in our global economy. I ask the people on the other side of the aisle to join with us in order to do what is right for our American students.

THE EXPANSION OF ED-FLEX PERMITS DELEGATION OF GREATER AUTHORITY IN EDUCATION TO STATES AND LOCALITIES

(Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, as the former chairman of the Northern Kentucky University Board of Regents, I believe that all too often education decisions are made at the Federal level by bureaucrats who have little knowledge of the needs of the school at the local level, leaving teachers, principals, and local school boards with their hands tied.

That is why I support the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999. The expansion of Ed-Flex allows the Secretary of Education to delegate to States the authority to waive Federal regulation requirements that interfere with the schools' ability to educate our children.

The proposed legislation makes many programs eligible for waivers. The bill will help do away with many burdensome Federal regulations, giving more decision-making power to the local level. Our schools must have the flexibility to tailor specific solutions to specific problems. Local school boards understand local needs best.

IT IS TIME TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EIGHTH WONDER OF THE WORLD, COMPOUND INTEREST

(Mr. COOKSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, Baron Rothschild once said, I do not know what the Seven Wonders of the World are, but I do know the eighth, compound interest. Mr. Speaker, Baron Rothschild called compound interest the eighth wonder of the world for a good reason. Modest amounts of money, when invested and then reinvested, grow over time in a spectacular fashion. It takes patience but it works, as all seniors who started out with modest means but saved now know.

The biggest reason why social security needs to be reformed is not because it is going bankrupt, although it is impossible to deny that it is. No, the biggest reason why social security needs to be reformed is because the current system denies ordinary workers the benefits of compound interest. Money taken out of a worker's paycheck does not go into a fund that will earn compound interest. It is spent. The money does not grow, and benefits can only come from taking money out of someone else's paycheck.

It is time to take advantage of the eighth wonder of the world.

TIME FOR A BIPARTISAN SCHOOL MODERNIZATION ACT

(Mr. LARSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, school buildings in this Nation represent a \$2 trillion investment, an investment that was primarily made by a generation of people who survived the depression and fought and won the Second World War. Upon returning, they saw the need to expand schools, saw the need to provide for their children, saw the responsibility that was placed upon them as they addressed the issue of a crumbling infrastructure system and the need to have schools that were not overcrowded and could provide the best possible education.

Many of the Members of Congress are beneficiaries of that generation. It is the responsibility of us today to embrace the issue of school modernization and pass in a bipartisan effort the School Modernization Act. By providing these monies, we can ensure not only smaller classes, but address the infrastructure concerns and the technological concerns that we need to take this Nation and our children into the 21st century.

Let me conclude by saying this, that this is a match that cannot be postponed.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 707, DISASTER MITIGATION AND COST REDUCTION ACT OF 1999

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 91 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 91

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 707) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize a program for predisaster mitigation, to streamline the administration of disaster relief, to control the Federal costs of disaster

assistance, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. Points of order against consideration of the bill for failure to comply with clause 4(a) of rule XIII are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered by title rather than by section. Each title shall be considered as read. During consideration of the bill for amendment, the chairman of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read. The chairman of the Committee of the Whole may: (1) postpone until a time during further consideration in the Committee of the Whole a request for a recorded vote on any amendment; and (2) reduce to five minutes the minimum time for electronic voting on any postponed question that follows another electronic vote without intervening business, provided that the minimum time for electronic voting on the first in any series of questions shall be 15 minutes. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). The gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my friend, the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), the ranking member, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to bring forward another noncontroversial open rule under the leadership of the gentleman from California (Chairman DAVID DREIER).

The rule waives clause 4(a) of rule XIII requiring a 3-day layover of the committee report against consideration of the bill. The rule provides for 1 hour of general debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and makes in order our committee amendment in the nature of a substitute as an original bill for the purposes of amendment.

The Chair is authorized to accord priority in recognition to members who

have preprinted their amendments in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit, with or without instructions. This is an otherwise wonderful rule that should certainly engender no controversy, and deserves, I believe, the support of the full House.

H.R. 707, which this carries, is the straightforward commonsense solution to a very real problem that impacts folks in my district and, of course, throughout the country as well.

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The problem we are facing is not a new one: How to improve the way we plan for and deliver assistance to communities that have the misfortune to be hit by natural disasters.

I commend the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER), my Florida colleague, for her leadership on this important issue and for the substantive, bipartisan work product which she has delivered.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 707 improves the process by outlining seven specific, objective criteria for awarding grants and by requiring mitigation projects to be cost-effective. H.R. 707 increases the role of the State and local governments in the short term and requires FEMA to develop a process for delegating a greater portion of the hazard mitigation piece to the States after fiscal year 2000.

Having witnessed a number of natural disasters, regrettably in my own district and elsewhere, I know that hazard mitigation is best accomplished at the local level, where people tie down their roofs and board up their windows. This bill clearly moves in that direction.

This is a sound approach that will help our constituents at every stage of the process. Our communities will be better prepared for disasters and, when one hits, the process to receive assistance will be streamlined and more efficient. I know that will be welcomed news.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 707 complements an effort that the Committee on Rules has been working on in conjunction with the Committee on the Budget to fix our broken budget process. One of the pillars of our bill, the Comprehensive Budget Process Reform Act, is the creation of a reserve fund to budget up front for emergencies, an initiative long championed by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), the former governor of Delaware.

H.R. 707 enjoys the support of several major organizations, including many at the front lines such as the American Red Cross and the National League of Cities. In fact, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER) has been working closely with the administration and has incorporated a number of recommendations from them in this package. As a result, FEMA is also supporting H.R. 707.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that effective mitigation saves lives and

money. H.R. 707 is a good bipartisan bill that is long overdue. I encourage my colleagues to support this open, fair rule, as well as the underlying bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Sanibel, Florida (Mr. GOSS) for yielding me the customary half-hour, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 5 years, natural disasters have killed over 800 people in the United States. In addition to costing people their lives, these disasters cost \$60 billion in property loss and other damage.

But this open rule provides for the consideration of the bill which will help minimize the loss of life and property due to fires, floods, hurricanes earthquakes and tornadoes.

Mr. Speaker, it will enable Federal, State, and local governments to take steps to prepare for disasters before they happen in order to minimize the injuries or damage caused by these natural disasters.

This bill will help people. It will create firebreaks to stop the spread of wildfires, it will help build emergency generators to provide electricity during hurricanes, it will strengthen water towers and retrofit overpasses to slow the impact of earthquakes, and it will seal manhole covers in case of floods.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will also enable the President to help people who do not have disaster insurance make emergency repairs to their homes in a timely fashion.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, last year was one of the deadliest hurricane seasons in more than 200 years, killing about 10,000 people in eight countries and causing billions and billions of dollars in damage. Experts predict that this year will even be worse, particularly in the Atlantic basin.

Mr. Speaker, this June we had horrible flooding in my home State of Massachusetts. The damage was so bad that President Clinton declared seven Massachusetts counties disaster areas. Thousands upon thousands of people applied for recovery assistance to repair the damage, most of which was caused by surge backup and overflows. Mr. Speaker, we all know that kind of damage is not always covered by property insurance and people usually learn about it just a little too late. This bill will help those people.

This bill is also based on the idea that if we prepare for disasters now, we will save people's lives and people's property later.

Conservative estimates are that this bill will save \$109 million over the first 5 years; and that is assuming that a dollar spent before disaster is only worth a dollar after disaster. And, Mr. Speaker, most people say the numbers are even greater, that every dollar spent now saves \$3 later. Mr. Speaker, either way, this bill will pay for itself and then some.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill and support this open rule. It is supported by the American Red Cross, the National Emergency Management Association, and it will make a big difference in people's lives when they need it most.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the honorable gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and the bill, but I want to talk a little bit about an amendment I am going to offer because it is not done yet, so I am going to belabor the point for about a minute. It is a "Buy American" amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if my colleagues noticed this past week they sent around these television remotes. They are like yellow toys. They are squeezey, real soft. They look like Teletubby toys. They are yellow. And when we look at them, everybody just says, look at this, the telecommunications industry is lobbying the Congress of the United States. What a way to get our attention.

Then if one turns it over on the other side and looks at the back and looks down at the bottom, it is made in China. I know everybody laughs about this, and we argue about flies on our face. I think we have got a dragon eating our assets.

But here is what I want to talk about. I think it is time to look at Buy American laws and to enforce what Buy American laws are on the books. From Teletubbies to remotes lobbying the Congress, the labels now read "Made for U.S.A." And if we look at it, on first glance we think it is made in the U.S.A. But we need the Hubble telescope to look at it further, and it says "Made for U.S.A." in big print, and down in microscopic print it says "Made in China." Come on, now, I think we even have to toughen these laws up.

Mr. Speaker, I am going have a little amendment. I congratulate the gentlewoman from Florida (Chairman FOWLER) on her very first bill. She is, in fact, making sure there will be enough money in this bill with her amendment, and we on this side support her and her amendment. I notified my colleagues of my amendment, and I hope it has time to get here.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, we have no requests for time at this point. I only urge that Members support this fair, open rule.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I was inadvertently detained and unable to